

## 3. Personality

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### Learning objectives

1. To illustrate an understanding of the concept of personality.
2. To assess and describe the various factors affecting personality.
3. To analyse and explain the various perspectives of studying personality.
4. To evaluate and explain the various techniques of measuring personality.

### Activity 1

Read the following examples and express your opinion about the concept of personality:

1. Rohan is a good looking boy. He is a genius, but extremely arrogant. He always shouts at his friends. He always talks very rudely to his parents.
2. Ruchi is a girl with ordinary looks. She is poor in her studies but always gets along nicely with her friends. She always talks in a polite manner to everyone.

### 3.1 Introduction:

By reading the examples given in the above box, you must have started thinking about the meaning and nature of personality.

Generally people wrongly believe that an individual with attractive looks, has a good personality. But in psychology, the term personality has a much broader meaning.

From the psychological point of view, personality is not related to an individual's external physical appearance, but to an individual's characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving throughout life.

### 3.2 Definitions of Personality -



The word personality is derived from the Latin word "persona" which means mask. During olden days, Greek stage actors used to wear suitable masks as per the need of the characters they used to enact. The meaning of the word personality thus got interpreted as the projected behaviour.

Many psychologists have defined personality as per their own perspectives. **Some of the definitions of personality are as follows :**

1. According to Norman Munn, "Personality is a unique combination of individual's physical structure, needs, interests, abilities and aptitudes."
2. According to Gordon Allport, "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determines his unique adjustments to the environment."

### 3.3 Factors shaping personality :

#### Activity 2

Look at the list given below and discuss with your friends which of these factors

have a stronger influence in shaping personality :

- (1) Nutritious diet
- (2) Junk food
- (3) Physique
- (4) Exercise
- (5) Technology
- (6) Peer group
- (7) Parents
- (8) Neighbours
- (9) Relatives
- (10) Childhood experiences.

An individual's personality gets shaped by a wide variety of factors, which often act in conjunction. Some of the factors shaping personality of an individual are as follows :

#### 1. Heredity :

Heredity implies all those characteristics that an individual inherits from his parents. Heredity affects the physical and mental makeup of a person. For example, inherent physical characteristics like height, physical structure, colour of eyes, etc. It may also influence the self-concept, which in turn may influence the personality make up of an individual.

#### 2. Endocrine glands :

Endocrine glands such as the pituitary, thyroid, pancreas, adrenals gonads, etc. play an important role in shaping personality of an individual. Over secretion or the under secretion of hormones produced by various glands may adversely affect the personality of an individual. For example, an over secretion of the thyroxin hormone produced by thyroid gland leads to nervous tension, irritability, restlessness and emotional instability, etc. which may adversely affect the personality of an individual.

#### 3. Family:

Family is one of the most important factors influencing personality of an individual. The

elements related to family such as structure of family, socio-economic status of family, emotional, academic and cultural environment in family, interactions between family members, child rearing practices followed by parents, etc. have significant effects on personality of an individual.

For example, in a family having warm emotional atmosphere, parents have healthier relations with their children. Love and respect shown by parents towards their children boosts the self-confidence and self-esteem of children. This in turn positively affects the personality of children. On the contrary, over protection, rejection, negligence, etc. shown by parents towards their children leads to low self-esteem and low self-confidence among children which have adverse effects on the personality of children.

#### 4. Peer group :

Peers are a pervasive aspect of our social life. Peers surround us in our everyday lives from early childhood until old age. Members of the same classroom, workplace or sports club, etc. constitute peer group. The peer group may influence personality in a positive as well as negative manner.

For example, good habits such as studying regularly, developing healthy attitude towards one's own gender and the opposite gender, etc. may be developed by being in a good company of friends. Similarly, the unhealthy habits such as bunking lectures, developing various addictions, showing aggressive tendencies and bullying etc. may be developed by being in a bad company of friends.

#### Activity 3

Think how the peer group may influence you with respect to factors given below:

1. Hairstyle
2. Dressing style
3. Eating habits
4. Study habits
5. Communication skills
6. Attitudes
7. Decision making
8. Likes and dislikes, etc.

#### 5. School:

The school plays an important role in the personality development of students. The elements related to school like the teaching learning process, academic activities and co-curricular facilities provided by school, teachers' rapport with students, school discipline and policies etc. have a significant impact on the personality of students.

For example, a creative, well qualified, experienced and well-mannered teacher acts as a role model for his / her students. Such teachers provide maximum opportunities for the optimum development of the potential of their students. This in turn helps students to develop their personality in a healthier manner.

#### 6. Mass media:

Internet and other forms of mass media are now deeply integrated in almost everyone's daily lives. Mass media is a source of entertainment, informal education, socialization, etc. to many of us.

Nowadays, majority of adolescents spend more and more time in front of the TV, mobile and computer which may affect their personality.

For example, mass media may help an individual to have an updated knowledge of current affairs, etc. which in turn positively affects the development of an individual's personality.

On the other hand, an excessive addiction of using media may cause disconnection from the world, egocentrism, sleep deprivation, poor academic performance, insecurity, anti-social behaviours, loneliness, etc. which in turn adversely affects the development of an individual's personality.

### 7. Culture:

Cultural factors also play an important role in shaping the personality of an individual. Every culture has its own set of values, beliefs, norms, etc. influencing thoughts, feelings and behaviour patterns of an individual.

For example, leadership qualities, listening skills, entrepreneurial skills, tendencies to cooperate with others, etc. may differ from culture to culture and therefore people from different cultural backgrounds may have different personalities.

## 3.4 Perspectives of studying Personality:

There are various perspectives of studying personality. A brief information of some of them is given in the following table :

**1. Psychoanalytic Perspective :** This perspective emphasizes the importance of early childhood experiences and the unconscious mind in the development of personality.

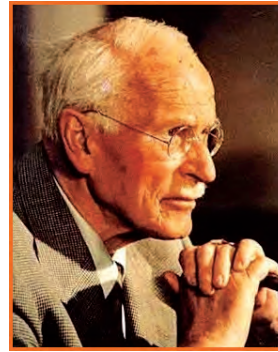
**2. Humanistic Perspective:** This perspective assumes the importance of free will and psychological growth in the personality development of an individual.

**3. Trait Perspective:** This perspective assumes that every individual possesses specific traits in different quantities and so every individual has a unique personality.

**4. Type perspective :** This perspective assumes that every individual has a unique personality type based on his physique, temperament and mental characteristics.

**5. Social Cognitive Perspective :** This perspective emphasizes the importance of observational learning and cognitive processes in the personality development of an individual.

### 3.4.1 Carl Jung's Theory of Personality :



**Carl Jung**

Carl Jung's theory of personality is one of the personality theories based on the type perspective of studying personality.

Carl Jung, a Swiss Psychiatrist classified people on the basis of mental characteristics

into introverts and extroverts as follows :

- 1. Introverts :** Introvert individuals tend to look within themselves for stimulation. Mostly they are shy and reserved. They prefer to work alone and avoid social contacts.
- 2. Extroverts :** Extrovert individuals are aroused by external stimulation. They are social, outgoing, mix easily with others and prefer jobs that bring them in contact with others.

### Do you know ?

In real life we find that no one is either completely an introvert or completely an extrovert. Most of us are ambivert in nature.

An ambivert is someone who falls in the middle of the introvert and extrovert continuum. An ambivert individual has a blend of traits of introversion and extroversion.

#### Activity 4

Make two separate lists of jobs requiring more need of talking and jobs requiring less need of talking. Try to find out which of your friends will be suitable for these two types of jobs.

### 3.4.2 Allport's theory of personality :

Allport's theory of personality is one of theories based on the trait perspective to study personality.



**Gordon Allport**

Gordon Allport, an American psychologist identified 18000 separate terms which could be used to describe personality. Based on these

descriptions he suggested the following three basic categories of traits :

A trait is a relatively enduring and consistent way of thinking, feeling and acting. That means the trait is consistently found in an individual over a period of time.

1. **Cardinal Trait** : It is a single trait that dominates an individual's entire personality. The person becomes known specifically for this trait. It dominates and shapes a person's behaviour for their whole life.

For example, a trait of truthfulness was the cardinal trait in Mahatma Gandhi's personality. Similarly, a trait of humanitarianism was the cardinal trait in Mother Teresa's personality, a trait of ambition was the cardinal trait in Napoleon Bonaparte and Power was the cardinal trait in Julius Caesar's personality .

### Cardinal Traits



**Truthful**



**Humanitarian**



**Ambitious**



**Lust for power**

2. **Central Traits** : These traits are general characteristics that form the basic foundation of a personality of an individual. Around 5 to 10 traits that best describe an individual's personality are called central traits.

Central traits are the building blocks of our personality. For example, traits like sensitivity, sociability, self-confidence, diligence, honesty, etc. are the central traits possessed by an individual.

3. **Secondary Traits** : These traits appear only in specific situations and hence are narrow in effect. Such traits play a very minor role in determining the personality of an individual because such traits are situational. For example, getting anxious when speaking to a group, being impatient while waiting in a queue, etc. are the secondary traits possessed by an individual.

### 3.4.3 Big Five Factor Model of personality : (OCEAN)

Big five factor model is one of the



personality theories based on the trait perspective to study personality.



Robert McCrae



Paul Costa

Robert McCrae and Paul Costa (1987) developed a theory of personality explaining the five major factors of personality. According to them personality traits are considered as basic tendencies that are rooted in biology and that interact with external influences including culture in shaping the skills, habits, tastes, and values of the individual. The five major factors (traits) of personality are as follows :

**(1) Openness to experience (O) :** Openness to experience is a trait related to appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, creativity, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience.

People who are open to experience are curious, imaginative, and creative whereas those who are less open to experience are non-creative and lack aesthetic sense.

**(2) Conscientiousness (C) :** Conscientiousness is a trait showing tendency to display self-discipline. It is related to the way in which people control, regulate, and direct their impulses.

People having high conscientiousness are well organized, responsible, dependable, hardworking whereas people having low conscientiousness are unorganized, irresponsible, spontaneous and careless.

**(3) Extroversion (E) :** Extroversion is a trait characterized by breadth of activities and energy creation from external means.

People having high extroversion are talkative, enthusiastic, open minded, sociable, assertive, and courageous. On the other hand, people having low extroversion are less talkative, shy, alone and less involved.

**(4) Agreeableness (A) :** The agreeableness is a trait showing an ability of an individual to get along with people and concern for social harmony.

People having high agreeableness are kind, loving, caring, friendly and cooperative whereas people having low agreeableness are uncooperative, jealous, hostile and argumentative.

**(5) Neuroticism (N) :** Neuroticism is a trait showing the tendency to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or depression.

People having high neuroticism are anxious, depressed, irritable, fearful, impulsive, angry and unstable. People having low neuroticism are balanced, calm and stable.

#### Activity 5

Go to the link given below and find out your score on Big Five Personality Test.

<https://nobaproject.com/modules/personality-traits>

### 3.5 Measurement of personality :

Psychologists seek to measure personality through a number of methods. Behavioural analysis techniques, self-report inventories, projective techniques and psycho-analytical methods of measuring personality are as follows:

#### 3.5.1 Behavioural Analysis:

The behavioural techniques such as interview and observation, etc. help in assessing

the personality of an individual. These behavioural techniques can be explained as follows:

**(a) Interview :**

Interview is the most common method of measuring personality. An interview is a process in which an interviewer tries to collect information about the personality of an interviewee by asking him / her various questions.

The factors like time taken to give answers, gestures, postures, body movements, etc. of an interviewee are also taken into account while measuring personality of an interviewee.

The following are the main types of interviews :

1. **Structured interview :** Structured interview is a type of interview in which total number of questions to be asked to the interviewee, the sequence of questions etc. factors are predetermined. No questions are added or deleted on the spot. Generally, industrial psychologists use structured interview while selecting a particular employee for a particular job.
2. **Unstructured interview :** Unstructured interview is a type of interview in which the total number of questions to be asked to the interviewee, the sequence of questions etc. factors are not predetermined. Depending on the responses of an interviewee, some questions are added or deleted on the spot. Generally, clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists, health psychologists, sport psychologists, etc. use unstructured interview for collecting detailed information about personality of their clients.

**Activity 6**

Take an interview of any two of the following individuals and try to collect information about some unique features of their personalities :

- (1) Principal of your college
- (2) Your psychology teacher
- (3) A businessman from your locality
- (4) A salesman from your locality
- (5) A politician from your locality
- (6) A lawyer from your locality .

**(b) Observation :**

Observing an individual in various situations is another important method of personality measurement. For example, a psychologist can observe how a child behaves when the teacher is not present in the classroom or how a factory worker behaves in a workshop when the supervisor is not present.

Observation method proves very helpful if it is used by a trained psychologist (observer) and with clear objectives and guidelines for observations.

Naturalistic observation, laboratory observation, participant observation, non-participant observation etc. are some of the types of observations that are helpful to collect information about the personality of an individual.

**Activity 7**

Use observation method and try to get few ideas of the personalities of the following individuals :

- (1) Traffic controller
- (2) News reporter
- (3) Private detective
- (4) Interior designer
- (5) Nurse
- (6) Teacher.

**3.5.2 Self report inventories:**

In self-report technique an individual provides information of his / her own personality

by responding to questions / sentences set in a particular inventory. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), 16 Personality Factors (PF) by Cattell, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), High School Personality Inventory (HSPQ) are some of the examples of self report inventory.

### Activity 8

Look at the specimen of self-report inventory given below.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	No Opinion	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I am easygoing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have high standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy time alone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I work well with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I dislike confrontation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer crowds over intimacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 3.5.3. Projective methods:

Projective methods emerged from the psychoanalytic school of thought. Projective methods are intended to uncover feelings, desires, and conflicts that are hidden at the unconscious level.

In projective test situations, an individual responds freely to relatively unstructured or ambiguous materials. While responding, individuals project their own personalities onto the unstructured stimulus, often revealing personal conflicts, motivations, coping styles, and other characteristics. Some of the major Projective tests are as follows:

### (a) Rorschach's Ink-Blot Test :



This test was developed by Hermann Rorschach in 1921. It uses ten irregular-ink-blot (five in

black and white, five in colour.) standing against a white background. Each inkblot is shown in a fixed number of ways and the subjects are asked to describe what they see in each card. The subjects are allowed to hold the card in any position they want, whether it's upside down or sideways. Analysis of this test requires trained and skilful examiner.

### (b) Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) :



The TAT was developed by Morgan and Murray in 1935. It requires the individual to look at the picture and to interpret it by telling a story. The individual is invited to say what led up

to the scene in the picture. Why such events occurred, what is currently happening and what the consequences will be?

### (c) Sentence-completion test :

In this test an individual is given a series of incomplete (partial) sentences and he/she is asked to complete them in his/her own words. For example, I feel anxious when .....

### Activity 9

Sentence completion test may have such sentences :

- (1) I feel afraid of .....
- (2) When something goes wrong .....
- (3) When someone troubles me .....
- (4) For me, my college is .....
- (5) I wish .....



## Summary

- Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determines his/her unique adjustments to the environment.
- Many factors shape personality of an individual.
- Psychoanalytical perspective, humanistic perspective, trait

perspective, type perspective, social cognitive perspective are some of the important perspectives of studying personality.

- Psychologists have developed various techniques of measurement of personality. These techniques include behavioural analysis, self-report techniques and projective methods.

## Important Concepts

- Endocrine glands
- Type approach
- Trait approach
- Introvert
- Extrovert

- Conscientiousness
- Neuroticism
- Cardinal traits
- Central traits
- Projective methods

## Important Psychologists

- **Gordon W. Allport** : American psychologist, he was one of the first psychologists to focus on the study of the personality. He identified 18000 separate terms which could be used to describe personality. He suggested three basic categories of traits i.e. cardinal, central and secondary traits.
- **Carl Jung** : Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology. He classified people into two personality types viz. introverts and extroverts.

- **Robert McCrae** : American psychologist, co-author of big five personality model along with Paul Costa.
- **Paul Costa** : American psychologist, co-author of big five personality model along with Robert McCrae.
- **Starke Hathaway** : He was one of the co-author's of Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. MMPI is the most frequently used personality tests in the field of mental health.

## Important Psychologists

- **J. C. McKinley** : American psychologist who constructed MMPI along with S. R. Hathaway.
- **Raymond B. Cattell** : He developed 16 Personality Factors (16 PF) for identifying primary traits.

- **Henry Murray** : American psychologist who developed Thematic Apperception Test (TAT).
- **Hermann Rorschach** : Swiss psychologist who developed ink blot test, one of the oldest projective method.

## Exercises

### Q. 1 Choose the correct option and complete the following statements:

1. A person who is shy and reserved is called an .....  
(a) introvert (b) extrovert (c) ambivert
2. The ink blot test was developed by psychologist .....  
(a) Murray (b) Rorschach (c) Morgan
3. .... traits are the dominant characteristics of a person.  
(a) Cardinal (b) Secondary (c) Central

### Q. 2 Match the following pairs.

- | Group 'A'                | Group 'B'                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Self report technique | (a) Interview                 |
| 2. Behavioural analysis  | (b) MMPI                      |
| 3. Projective methods    | (c) Permanent characteristics |
|                          | (d) TAT                       |

### Q. 3 State whether the following statements are true or false:

1. Personality is merely related to external appearance.
2. People with high neuroticism are emotionally reactive.
3. Children from families having a warm emotional atmosphere are well adjusted.

### Q. 4 Explain the following Concepts in 25 to 30 words:

1. Personality

2. Trait
3. Sentence completion test
4. Structured interview
5. Unstructured interview

### Q. 5 Write short notes on the following :

1. Gordon Allport's trait theory of personality
2. Effect of mass media on personality development

### Q. 6 Answer the following questions with given points in 100 to 150 words each.

1. Explain the Big Five Factors model of Personality.  
Points : (i) Neuroticism  
(ii) Extroversion  
(iii) Openness to experience  
(iv) Agreeableness  
(v) Conscientiousness
2. Explain the factors influencing personality.  
Points : (i) Family  
(ii) School  
(iii) Peer group  
(iv) Culture
3. Explain the various methods of personality measurement.  
Points : (i) Behavioural analysis  
(ii) Self report technique  
(iii) Projective method

